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ABSTRACT

This packet is designed to provide strategies and suggestions for raising awareness and taking action on issues related to quality, compensation, and affordability in early childhood programs. Specific materials are designed for early childhood personnel, parents, civic and volunteer organizations, media, and policymakers. However, many of the strategies listed for one group are applicable to others. Contents include: (1) suggested workshop outlines for various audiences; (2) tips for raising the indicated issues with legislators and other policy makers; (3) tips for working with the media and a sample press release; (4) suggestions for strategies others have used to successfully address the problem of low salaries; (5) a brochure describing the crisis in recruiting and retaining qualified early childhood staff; and (6) a list of resources for further information. Supplementary materials include a "feedback sheet"; an order form listing books, kits, brochures, and videos; a brochure on a book dealing with the problems of recruiting and retaining early childhood staff and similar material from the Child Care Employee Project. (RH)

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Quality, Compensation, & Affordability in Early Childhood Programs

An Action Kit

PS 018345

National Association for the Education of Young Children

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Introduction

Talk to any early childhood provider and one of the first topics of conversation will surely relate to some aspect of the early childhood staff recruitment and retention crisis. As the national employment rate rises, early childhood programs are suffering as staff, often reluctantly, leave the field for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. If this crisis is so bad, why hasn't more been done to address it? The sad truth is that there are no easy solutions to the problem. Much has been written about what Gwen Morgan calls the "child care trilemma"—the difficulties in assuring good programs for children, adequate compensation for program staff, and an affordable price for parents.

Unlike many consumer costs, child care prices have remained virtually unchanged over the last decade (consider what has happened over the same time to the cost of a fast-food hamburger). Some economists say that this "proves" there is no crisis in child care, or else the laws of supply and demand would cause prices to rise. There is another possible interpretation: this illustrates the increasing but hidden subsidy families receive from early childhood staff, whose compensation is often far below the value of their work. Consider that as much as 80% of the child care administrative budget consists of personnel costs. While parents have not borne remarkable cost increases over the last decade, many programs have. Building costs, supply costs, and insurance costs have all mushroomed, and in some cases exploded. Such increases have been largely absorbed in the personnel budget, which helps to explain the current crisis many programs face in recruiting and retaining qualified staff.

Why don't parents pay more for child care? Some parents undoubtedly can pay more for child care, and some can afford the true costs of good programs. But, for many parents even the current market rate of care overwhelms the family budget. Many parents of young children are young themselves and haven't achieved the seniority or perquisites that help them better afford good programs for their children.
Despite the fact that early childhood program costs are paid primarily by parents and providers, all of society benefits when young children receive high quality services. It is time that the costs of early childhood program provision be shared more equitably by all sectors of society. Businesses, private charities, and government at every level must all lend their assistance. Such partnerships are needed to achieve solutions that provide affordable programs for families with adequately compensated and qualified staff who can provide the good level of quality that every child deserves. All of these players must help to address the recruitment and retention crisis. In addition, successfully addressing the problem will require the active participation of all early childhood professionals.

This packet is designed as a series of tips, strategies, and suggestions for raising awareness and *taking action* on issues related to quality, compensation, and affordability in early childhood programs. Different audiences are targeted for use with this packet. Specific materials are designed for early childhood personnel, parents, civic/voluntary organizations, media, and policy makers. However, many of the strategies listed for one group will be applicable to others.

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The contents of this packet include

1. Suggested workshop outlines for different audiences (early childhood personnel, parents, and civic/ volunteer groups)

2. Tips for raising the issues of quality, compensation, and affordability with legislators and other policy makers (prepared by Joan Lombardi)

3. Tips for working with the media, including a sample press release on the topic

4. Suggestions for strategies others have used to successfully address the problem of low salaries (excerpted from *Raising Salaries: Strategies That Work* from the Child Care Employee Project and adapted from *Taking Action* by Jim Morin)

5. A brochure describing the current crisis in recruiting and retaining qualified early childhood staff

6. A list of additional resources for further information

This packet was compiled primarily by Barbara Willer, in consultation with the NAEYC Advisory Panel on Quality, Compensation, and Affordability. The panel was established by the NAEYC Governing Board in 1987 for the purpose of developing recommendations for Board action to address the interrelations of good program quality, adequate compensation for staff, and affordable programs for families.

Members of the 1988-89 QCA Advisory Panel are

Joan Lombardi, Chair
NAEYC Governing Board
Alexandria, VA

Jerlean Daniel
NAEYC Governing Board
Pittsburgh, PA

Robert Granger
Bank Street College of Education
New York, NY

Janice Hale-Benson
NAEYC Governing Board
Cleveland, OH

Kathy Modigliani
Bank Street College of Education
New York, NY

Jim Morin
NAEYC Secretary
Madison, WI

Marcy Whitebook/Caro Pemberton
Child Care Employee Project
Berkeley, CA

Ellen Galinsky
NAEYC President
New York, NY

Strategies for Improving Early Childhood Compensation

The major reason underlying the recruitment and retention crisis in early childhood programs is the preponderance of inadequate compensation for early childhood staff. Following are a list of strategies specifically designed as action steps toward improving compensation. Strategies 1 through 5 are adapted from *Taking Action: Improving Compensation in the Early Childhood Field by Promoting Early Childhood Activism* by Jim Morin. Strategies 6 through 10 are adapted from "Focusing the Spotlight on the Staffing Crisis and What You Can Do," by Joan Lombardi, *Dimensions*, April 1989.) In addition, specific examples of successful approaches for centers, communities and states are also outlined. These success stories are excerpted with permission from ***Raising Salaries: Strategies That Work,*** by Marcy Whitebook, Caro Pemberton, Joan Lombardi, Ellen Galinsky, Dan Bellm, and Bryn Fillinger, published by the Child Care Employee Project.

1. **Find ways to discuss the issue and begin to promote concern for adequate compensation.**

   - Speak to co-workers individually, in small groups, or in staff meetings.
   - Use professional meetings to raise the compensation issue.
   - Help employees identify those obstacles to action over which they themselves have control.
   - Point out the impact of inadequate compensation on the ability of the child care field to deliver high quality child care services.

2. **Develop useful written information on the compensation issue.** Accurate information on the current wage and benefit levels in your state or community is essential to give people an accurate picture of how those levels compare with other occupational groups can be very powerful. Data showing that parking lot attendants are paid more than child care workers are powerful because they point out a contradiction in values that most child care employees would agree with.

3. **Draw attention to media accounts of the compensation issue.** Keep a bulletin board display where relevant articles can be kept on display, or simply pass around copies of articles addressing this issue.

4. **Use the letters to the editor section of your local newspaper to relate the compensation issue to some other coverage of child care.** With this tool you have the advantage of being able to present your own thoughts. Again, this sort of media coverage is useful only if it is noticed by child care employees. Find ways to make this issue visible.

5. **Present the compensation issue at public hearings on child care topics.** Often the city council, county board, or state department in charge of funding child care will call a public hearing on proposed regulations, funding levels, or new program proposals. Those interested in promoting greater awareness of the compensation issue can take advantage of these opportunities to show how the compensation issue is related

to the stated topic of the hearing. Creative people can always find ways to talk about quality child care. Once you get to the issue of quality child care, the compensation issue is only a short step away.

6. **Identify some specific solutions.** When identifying solutions, consider these questions: What is it you want to do? Build public awareness? Expand your network? Develop a scholarship fund? Reallocate existing funds for salaries? In your program or in the community? Locate new sources of funds to improve salaries and training (increase reimbursement rates, raise parent fees, request special grant funds)? (See the following examples from *Raising Salaries: Strategies that Work.*)

7. **Reach out to parents.** Since the compensation issues is tied directly to affordability of services, it is critical that we help parents understand the staffing dilemma. Often parents do not realize the inadequate salaries and benefits that staff receive. Hold a workshop on the topic for parents. Share the effects of inadequate compensation and the staffing crisis with them. Let them help you in planning strategies for action. (See attached strategies for reaching out to parents from *Raising Salaries: Strategies that Work.*)

8. **Plan a public awareness event.** We have to go beyond just talking about the problem and bring the issue into the public eye. Many communities hold child care provider recognition days and use these events to build public awareness of the staffing crisis. You can also use such events to hold hearings in the community, invite an elected official, develop a press release, or invite the local media. These events are a good way to launch a salary survey or to announce the results, along with an action plan for change.

9. **Speak to policymakers and local groups.** Decision makers in both the public and private sector are finally talking about the child care issue. We need to take this opportunity to talk about the staffing crisis. Share your staffing stories with legislators through letters, personal visits, and invitations to your programs. Provide fact sheets and specific recommendations for what they can do. Develop a slide presentation using pictures of children and families in your program to talk about the early childhood profession and child care issues. Use your presentation when speaking to local business, civic, and religious groups in your community.

10. **Share your successes.** Many people feel overwhelmed by this problem. It is important to share our successes so that people continue to work toward improvements. When you hold a successful event or find other useful strategies to improve compensation, share them with other early childhood employees and your local, state, regional, and national professional organizations. Conduct a workshop, speak to a class at your local college, or write an article for a professional newsletter or journal.

Successful Strategies for Raising Salaries

*—Excerpted with permission from **Raising Salaries: Strategies That Work**, by Marcy Whitebook, Caro Pemberton, Joan Lombardi, Ellen Galinsky, Dan Bellm, and Bryn Fillinger. Published by the Child Care Employee Project.*

Too often people feel that solutions for the staff recruitment and retention crisis simply don't exist, or that they will simply lead to additional problems. These examples are real stories of people and programs that have successfully dealt with the leading cause of the recruitment and retention crisis—inadequate salaries for teachers and caregivers who work with children. The selection was made to include individual programs and community efforts. Each example provides ideas that may be adapted for nearly any situation. These are just a few of the strategies outlined in the *Raising Salaries* booklet from the Child Care Employee Project. We encourage you to purchase the entire book for $5 from the Child Care Employee Project, P.O. Box 5603, Berkeley, CA 94705; 415-653-9889.

Successful strategies for centers

Example #1
University View Child Care Center (UVCCC)
Fairfax, Virgina

Getting started University View Child Care Center was one of the first programs to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. The director used the center's new accreditation status as a vehicle to propose salary increases for employees.

Overcoming barriers UVCCC is part of the Salvation Army and their board determines salaries. By comparing staff members' salaries with similar professionals in the county, the director found that their salaries were falling behind comparable centers in the county subsidy program. Using this information, the director wrote a request for salary increases to the board, showing the need and proposing solutions. A chart was included that pointed out the teachers' educational qualifications, years of experience, and longevity at the center. With the assistance of a parent, the director devised a salary scale with step increases to encourage teachers to continue their work.

Getting results The board approved the salary compensation plan as proposed. Additional funds for salaries came from an increase in the county base reimbursement rate, a minimal increase in tuition, and an expansion of the school-age child care program. The overall increase for salaries was approximately 20%, which included step and once-a-year raises. This plan placed UVCCC salaries in the top range of similar agencies in their area.

For further information contact George Farrell, Director
University View Child Care Center
P.O. Box 125
Fairfax Station, VA 22039
703-385-8702

Example #2
The Acorn School
San Antonio, Texas

Getting started The Acorn School is a nonprofit half-day nursery school supported by parent fees. When the directors began the school 8 years ago, they knew from previous experience in child care that the essential ingredients of a good program were low staff–child ratios and a good teaching staff along with a sound child development philosophy. They were determined to maintain ratios of 1:5 and to pay more than the going salary rate in their community in order to attract qualified teaching staff.

Overcoming barriers Recognizing the need to provide quality and still maintain fees that would not discourage parents from enrollment, the decision was made to run a potential deficit each year ($25,000 in 1988), and to raise funds outside of parent fees to make up the difference. In the fall, the parents are presented with an annual report that explains the deficit, including an explanation of staff salaries, and are invited to make tax-deductible contributions. In February a benefit similar to a raffle drawing is held. Two hundred and fifty tickets are sold for $100 each. During a big party celebrating the event, the tickets are drawn for prizes that this year included $10,000 in cash, round trip tickets donated by American Airlines, about a dozen weekends at area hotels, and more than 200 prizes donated by local businesses.

Getting results The Acorn School raised almost $15,000 from this event. These funds, along with smaller donations received throughout the year, allow the school to maintain low staff–child ratios and pay teaching staff about 80% higher than the going rate in the community.

For further information contact
Rich Lange
The Acorn School
3501 Broadway
San Antonio, TX 78209
512–826-8804

Successful strategies for systems

Stamford Early Childhood Education Programs
Stamford, Connecticut

Getting started When the state of Connecticut raised salaries 30 to 40% for state–funded programs, the director of the Stamford Early Childhood Education Programs, a three-program system with 100 employees, faced a dilemma: salaries for state–funded staff in her system were much higher than staff whose funding came from United Way or the federal government (Head Start).

Overcoming barriers Although there were different funding auspices, this system had operated under one administration with the same educational goals. The director knew that salaries had to be the same for similar jobs in the system but there were no outside sources of funds. Thus, she had to raise the additional monies.

Getting results The director was able to equalize salaries by redoing the budget. Tuition funds went to salary increases. Other program needs were met by fundraising events. For example, raffles were held to buy a new van. Money was saved by using apprentice craftspeople (from a local training program) for center maintenance. Parents also volunteered their labor for upkeep to the building. The director sees this effort as a first step. Now she would like to raise salaries to be on a parity with comparable jobs in the public schools.

For further information contact:

Janet F. Norgren
Stamford Early Childhood Educational Programs
64 Palmers Hills Road
Stamford, CT 06902
203–323-5944

Successful strategies for communities

Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota

Getting started In 1988, the McKnight Foundation in Minneapolis, in its Aid to Families in Poverty Program, targeted the area of child care staff wages and benefits. According to Nancy Latimer of McKnight, the goal was to develop ways to enhance the salaries and status of child care staff without passing on the whole cost to parents.

Getting results In March 1988, The Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association and the Early Childhood Directors' Association received a grant of $468,000 for a 3½ year period. Under this grant, child care programs in the Twin City area can apply for small incentive grants of up to $10,000 and 80 hours of high level consultation over 3 years to improve their financial position and become stronger and better organizations. Grants can be used to upgrade salaries or benefit plans directly or to improve the organization's ability to generate more revenue through activities like marketing.

Overcoming barriers An advisory committee has established the following criteria for the awarding of grants and consultation time: (1) the program sets specific annual targets for improving staff wages, benefits, and working conditions; (2) child care staff and parents are involved in planning the targets and implementation plans; (3) the programs serve some low or moderate income families; (4) the programs are representative of the child care marketplace; and (5) the programs make plans for retaining the improvements when the McKight funding ends.

The progress of this initiative will be carefully evaluated. [Note: part of the evaluation will use the NAEYC Early Childhood Classroom Observation instrument to obtain direct measures of changes in program quality.] At the moment, the plan is for programs receiving consultation and incentive grants to be monitored and compared to programs that received training but no grants and programs that receive neither grants nor training. In order to affect the wider child care market and establish the feeling that "It can happen in my program too," there will be wide dissemination of the means by which programs are able to bring about changes and improvements that result.

For further information contact

Dale Anderson or Jim Greenman
The Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association
1006 West Lake
Minneapolis, MN 55408
612–823–7243

Successful strategies for states

Alaska

Getting started In 1981, state officials and advocates worked for a special allocation to improve the quality of child care and to provide incentives for providers to serve day care assisted (subsidized) children.

Overcoming barriers In order to convince the legislature that special funds were needed, the case was made for investing in quality child care as an economic issue. Efforts were made to demonstrate that child care is a labor intensive industry, that expenditures benefit the state, and that tax dollars should be spent on quality programs. Advocacy efforts included reaching out to those legislators who were sympathetic toward child care as well as to contact other legislators to gain support.

Getting results This effort resulted in the establishment of The Child Care Grant Program funded in 1981 at $1.2 million. The program is geared specifically toward helping licensed centers and family child care homes provide quality child care. It is also seen as an incentive for programs to serve subsidized children. To be eligible to receive funds, centers and homes must be willing to serve some (20%) day care assisted families that pay on a daily basis. Eligible centers and homes can apply for state funds to be used for any of the following six areas: staff compensation, augmenting staff, health and nutrition needs of children, age-appropriate equipment, staff training, and parent education and involvement. According to a state official, 90% of the funds are being used to increase salaries.

In 1981, participating providers received $25.00 a month for each child served (subsidized or not subsidized). For example, if a program served the equivalent of 50 full-time children, it would receive $1,250 ($25 x 50) per month. Since the number of children in care and the number of providers participating have increased, and the funds have decreased, that amount has dropped to $10 a month. However, the law allows up to $50 a month if funds become available. Due to the growing interest in child care in the state and the effectiveness of advocacy efforts, the Governor's Interim Commission on Children and Youth recommended increased funding to meet the statutory limit of $50.

For further information contact

Child Care Coordinator
State of Alaska
Department of Community and Regional Affairs
949 East 36th Avenue, Suite 403
Anchorage, AK 99508
907–563–1955

or

Patty Meritt
Executive Director
Play and Learn Inc.
655 Chena Pump Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709
907–479–0900

Successful strategies for reaching out to parents

Only a small minority of parents are aware that there is a crisis in child care, largely attributable to substandard salaries. While the vast majority may know that teachers have left their programs and it is difficult to find qualified replacements, they connect this with low wages. From the parents' vantage point, child care expenses are probably straining their budgets, leaving them to wonder where these dollars go.

Under these circumstances, relations between the child care staff and parents could easily become strained. The staff could resent the parents for not valuing their child care enough to attempt to raise funds or pay higher fees. The parents, in turn, could respond negatively to the tension and the continual need to pay more.

As many examples indicate, the struggle to increase salaries has been a joint undertaking between staff and parents. Where tension could have led so easily to divisiveness, it is a credit to the professionalism of child care advocates who realized that so much more could be gained by building alliances with parents.

Following are some suggestions from the Child Care Employee Project and others on how to build these alliances:

- Create a manual to introduce new parents to the center and include descriptions of your staff and their qualifications.

- Give parents a copy of the Child Care Employee Project's brochure, "*Who's Caring for Your Kids? What Every Parent Should Know About Child Care Providers*" or NAEYC's brochure, "*Where Your Child Care Dollars Go*"

- Use center newsletters or bulletin boards to post articles that bring parents' attention to the staffing shortage and salary issues.

- Be sure that parents know when staff people leave for economic reasons.

- Make salaries and working conditions a topic for a whole or portion of a parent meeting. If no one from your staff is comfortable speaking, bring in someone else such as a colleague from another center. (See the suggested workshop for parents.)

- Let parents know how much money is spent to operate your program. Make them aware of the salary range, vacation and sick day policies, and health care coverage. Help them understand that approximately 80% of the budget goes into salaries and that there are additional fixed costs, such as rent and insurance.

The Staffing Crisis: Getting the Word out to Legislators

by Joan Lombardi

The director's story is familiar to us: "Lisa was 21 and full of enthusiasm. The children and parents loved her, the staff loved her, I loved her. She was the perfect preschool teacher. She had taken college courses but had to stop because she could no longer afford them. The money she earned in child care would not allow her to meet her financial obligations. With tears in her eyes she resigned from our center."

As the great child care debate rages from Capitol Hill to the state house, from the local council chambers to the committee room, it is time that we share our stories and facts about the staffing crisis. Without our input, child care legislation will emerge that may not adequately address the issue which we know is affecting both the quality and supply of services—the status and compensation of child care providers.

Although a handful of states and localities have begun salary initiatives, and some pending federal proposals include language to ensure adequate compensation, in reality the issue has not received widespread attention by legislators or the general public. Through personal visits and testimony, letters and phone calls, we can step up efforts to broaden support for this critical issue.

Following are eight tips for speaking out to legislators on the child care staffing crisis.

1. **Talk about the nature of child care work.** Let people know what child care employees really do and why the work is so important. Talk about the training, skills, and experience needed to care for a group of children. Discuss a typical day in your program including activities planned for children and parents. Ask the teachers how they would describe their work and what it means to them. Use real examples and make it personal. During a recent hearing, one child care director described her work like this: "Our job is to be involved with the children...we hurt when they hurt, we are happy when they are happy, and they become a part our lives...."

2. **Discuss "where child care dollars go."** Because child care takes such a bite out of a family income, it is often difficult for people outside our field to understand the budget difficulties we face. Talk about your budget, your sources of funding and expenditures. Point out the relationships among inadequate salaries, low reimbursement rates, and the maintenance of affordable parent fees. Discuss the labor intensive nature of child care work. When talking to legislators, one child care advocate put it this way: "Where a lawyer, painter, or doctor may have hundreds of 'clients' from which to draw one salary, a child care provider salary is usually dependent on the fees of only a few parents."

3. **Provide facts on salaries.** If there has been a salary study in your state or community, provide a fact sheet on salaries and benefits. If no survey has been done, present exact figures on the hourly wages of staff in your program and their experience and training.

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4. **Talk about recruitment and retention.** Provide figures on turnover in your program and your experience with recruiting new staff. Put it in business terms. During recent hearings, one director said, "I have 11 positions in my center. Last year I did 41 W-2 forms, this year I did 55—it shows how often teachers came and went." Mention the difficulties of recruiting and retaining trained staff and the types of positions you are competing with in the community. For example: How many people responded to your last ad for teachers? What were their qualifications? Is this a change from past years? Where do staff go when they leave the program? What reasons do they give for leaving? Are you having difficulties even recruiting untrained staff?

5. **Discuss the effects on children and families.** To convince policy makers of the seriousness of the staffing crisis, we must demonstrate the link between quality and compensation. Talk about the relationship of turnover and vacancy rates to quality indicators such as group size, staff-child ratios, training, and continuity of care. Explain the importance to the young child of developing a secure attachment to the provider. Discuss the time it takes to build feelings of trust between children and staff. Provide comments from parents on the importance of the people that care for their children. Share stories of how the changes in staff appear to be affecting children. During testimony one director said, "The saddest aspect of this is that the children are victims." Feelings of insecurity are expressed to new staff. Children say, "Do you love me? Will you stay?"

6. **Talk about the effect on supply.** The staffing crisis affects supply as well as quality by limiting the number of providers available. Explain how the lack of staff is a barrier to program expansion. One director put it this way, "Right now my center has two fully equipped classrooms that are not being used, despite my waiting list, because I cannot find qualified staff willing to work for what we can afford to pay."

7. **Suggest solutions.** Legislators do not want to just hear about a problem; they want concrete ideas on how to solve it. Recommend specific action such as developing a special grant program to improve quality by providing funds for salary enhancement, increasing reimbursement rates, funding tuition assistance programs, or establishing benefit pools. You may also want to suggest other efforts that would help lower your overall costs and allow you to redirect resources to salaries. If you feel that your state or local legislators are not ready to consider such initiatives, at a minimum suggest that hearings be held on the issue or ask them to proclaim child care provider recognition day. Such an event can help capture media attention and can be used to organize new people to speak out to policy makers.

8. **Follow up.** Regardless of whether you visit legislators, take them on a tour of your program, or testify before a hearing, you will need to follow up your initial contact. As you hear of new studies on the issue or new information that demonstrates the effects of salaries on program quality and supply, pass this information along to your legislators and their staff. Regular correspondence and visits reinforce your message and demonstrate the seriousness of the problem.

Finally, a few words about style and attitude. As we know, the staffing crisis is a complicated and difficult issue. Although we have much to say, we should try to keep our message brief because busy legislators seem to hear more in "media bites." We should also be prepared to deal with both opposition and a general lack of understanding of the problem. We need to remain positive but not passive, determined but not defensive. As one longtime child care advocate put it, "Ours is a long distance race." Each small step can eventually add up if we seize our opportunity to speak out *now*.

—Joan Lombardi, Ph.D., is chair of the NAEYC Advisory Panel on Quality, Compensation, and Affordability and co-author of *Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy*, published by NAEYC.

Suggested Workshop Outlines

Workshop outlines for early childhood personnel

Two different approaches can be used in planning workshops for early childhood personnel. The first approach uses strategies tomake people aware of the issues related to the crisis in recruiting and retaining qualified staff and to help people begin to break the silence that has traditionally surrounded the topic of early childhood compensation. The second approach can be used with those already committed to take action. The different suggestions are based on the assumption that some providers may not realize what an active role they can play in dealing with the crisis of early childhood staff recruitment and retention and specifically improving compensation. Other audiences will be very much convinced that this topic demands **immediate** action and will look for specific ways to address the problem effectively.

Approach #1

Raising awareness of issues of staff recruitment and retention as ones that early childhood personnel can help to address

Purpose: *The goal of this workshop is to help early childhood teachers and child care providers better understand the reasons that all early childhood personnel should work to address the recruitment and retention crisis—specifically the problem of inadequate compensation—and to suggest effective strategies to allow them to do so.*

Key points

1. Many early childhood professionals are not motivated to address the recruitment and retention crisis. There are a number of contributing reasons.

   - The complexity of the issues makes easy solutions impossible. The issues can be so overwhelming that it seems there is nothing a small group can do to make a difference.

   - The early childhood field is by definition "a helping profession." As in other helping professions (nursing, social work, the clergy), many of those attracted to the field take a large degree of satisfaction from helping others and often help others at their own expense. This is particularly true with early childhood providers who worry about families not being able to afford programs and fear that children may lose needed services if they advocate on their own behalf.

   - The overworked and underpaid nature of the profession means that many simply do not have the physical or emotional energy to take on additional efforts.

- The care and education of young children is generally not valued by our society. Getting public investments in health care, education, and other social services are lengthy, arduous tasks for child advocates. Advocating for staff is even more difficult.

- The provision of early childhood services is a combination of formal and informal market structures. The fact that many families rely on informal arrangements through barter with or generosity of relatives, neighbors, and close friends deflates the price and continues the myth that these services can be provided by anyone, contributing to the devaluation of the field.

2. Individual providers *can* take effective action that will positively deal with the recruitment and retention crisis. Each action builds on those that have come before and makes a ripple that, combined with other individual efforts, will indeed add up to meaningful change.

3. Parents must be enlisted to support efforts to address the recruitment and retention crisis. Early childhood teachers and family day care providers are in an excellent position to encourage parent advocacy.

Handout: "Twelve Reasons for the Low Wages in Child Care," by Kathy Modigliani in *Young Children*, March 1988 (copy enclosed).

There are four different types of workshops you can plan to help raise awareness about the need for early childhood personnel to address the recruitment and retention crisis—and specifically the inadequacy of compensation.

Workshop A

1. Distribute handout and begin the workshop with a brief overview of the recruitment and retention crisis and its effects on children and staff. (See the materials in this packet, or consult the list of additional resources for other sources.) Try to include local data if available.

2. View the NAEYC video of the interview with Jim Morin and Marcy Whitebook about the compensation issue.

3. Have small groups discuss key points and report back to the full group. On points of consensus across groups, generate potential strategies. (See the successful strategies sheet for tips).

4. End the session with each participant stating one concrete action that she or he will take to begin addressing the problem.

Workshop B

Often a necessary first step to convincing providers to become advocates for the profession is to first help them appreciate the value of the work that they do. This session is designed to emphasize the importance of working with young children and to tries stimulate pride and self-esteem in those doing this vital work.

1. Begin by showing the video, *Celebrating Early Childhood Teachers.*

2. Follow the video with a panel of parents and/or business leaders testifying on the differences early childhood teachers have made for their children and in their business role.

This type of session could be easily incorporated in a recognition reception/dinner to honor early childhood teachers. Many groups have been able to obtain corporate support for this type of function. Weave this

presentation into such a meeting, and include a brief discussion about the difficulties of retaining good staff. (How many past honorees have left the field?) Link these remarks to plans for an upcoming action-oriented meeting. Again, end the session with each participant describing the concrete step she or he will take to address the issue.

Workshop C

One of the difficulties of workshops designed to build awareness is how to spark people's interest! Conference planners often cite a very low turnout to sessions on QCA issues. Many early childhood teachers and family day care providers are more interested in learning about activities that will help them in their day–to–day planning than in advocacy issues. It's best not to belittle this fact, but to recognize its reality. Just as developmental appropriateness means planning for individual needs and interests of children, so must this principle be applied to working with adults. Plan programs that offer both types of activities. Announce workshops that include both curriculum planning *and* a brief session on salary issues. The point is don't trick people into attending, but do plan a program that addresses different needs.

You might begin by asking participants to identify the number of staff who have left their program recently. Then briefly ask people to describe some of the frustrations and problems the turnover has created. Acknowledge the problems and the extent to which it is occurring locally and nationwide, and emphasize that something can and must be done to address the problems. Announce that after the workshop there will be a short meeting to begin talking about strategies to deal with the problem. One very important strategy that every provider can implement is help parents better understand the real cost of early childhood programs—and the higher cost of low quality programs. Ask participants to review the brochure, *Where Your Child Care Dollars Go*, and to sign up with you if they would like to distribute copies to parents. If you can provide copies at that point, great! If not, perhaps you can be responsible for ordering the materials and then seeing that they receive them.

Arrange this meeting shortly before a meeting following the format for those ready to take action (see section after Workshop D). This way you may be able to attract some of these participants too.

Workshop D

Another possibility is to design a session to help children and families cope with the disruption of staff turnover. The session can begin with an overview of a developmental framework to understand why disruptions in continuity are harmful to children. Participants can then brainstorm potential strategies to help minimize turnover effects on children. Suggestions are likely be plentiful and may include things such as discussing the departure with children matter-of-factly so that they realize that it was not their "fault," communicating with parents *before* and *after* the departure so that they can also help children deal with the loss, and keeping good written classroom records so that classroom routines can continue.

This workshop can stress that while helping children deal with high rates of turnover is necessary, we must also look for strategies to deal with the root of the problem—the inadequate levels of salaries and compensation received by many early childhood staff. In this way you can incorporate other activities described throughout this packet to build awareness of the issue and begin to mobilize individuals to take action.

Approach #2

Early childhood teachers ready to take action

Purpose: *To help participants gain a good working knowledge needed to build a convincing case about the interrelatedness of quality in early childhood programs, staff compensation, and affordability; and about how the inadequate levels of compensation currently provided to staff in an effort to keep programs affordable seriously affects program quality. Participants will also brainstorm potential strategies for action, review them in light of the local context, and begin planning for action.*

Handout: "Twelve Reasons for the Low Wages in Child Care," by Kathy Modigliani in *Young Children*, March 1988 (copy enclosed).

What's the problem and how did it arise?

Review local data on staff salaries and turnover if available. Compare these figures to national statistics (see the brochure in this packet). If no local or state surveys are available, ask workshop participants to give the average salary in their program, along with the number of teaching staff who have left during the past year. Use the "Twelve Reasons" handout as a brief overview of the problem.

What are the effects of the problem?

After a review of the local recruitment and retention problem, discuss its effects on children, families, staff, and communities. Encourage sharing among all participants to develop the list of effects. If needed, you can also supplement the discussion by referring to some of the effects described in *The Growing Crisis in Early Childhood Programs*, available from NAEYC.

Options for addressing the crisis

Participants should brainstorm to develop a list of strategies for addressing the problems. To get started, some potential strategies are provided in this packet. These were excerpted from the booklet, *Raising Salaries: Strategies That Work*, available from the Child Care Employee Project. (An order form for CCEP publications is included.) Addtional strategies are also discussed in *The Growing Crisis in Child Care: Quality, Compensation, and Affordability in Early Childhood Programs* (NAEYC #751).

Evaluating strategies and planning effective implementation

This section of the workshop is designed to help participants develop reasonable strategies for implementation. This requires assessing which types of activities are best undertaken by whom. For example, a local civic organization which has no power to raise program fees directly could organize a community education campaign to publicize the discrepancy between education and compensation and strive to increase local public child care funding. The key here is to encourage creative thinking. Assess ideas realistically, but don't assume that because it hasn't been done that it won't work. Once you have generated a list of strategies and determined first steps for making them happen, start putting the plans into action. Even before you end the first meeting, you can form committees to start organizing! If you get people to make commitments before they leave the meeting, it will be easier to implement your plan of action than if you have to call back and seek volunteers. Make the plans realistic, but make them happen!

Don't feel you have to solve the entire problem in one workshop. A very realistic plan might be to set up a meeting with several leaders of local civic groups (Kiwanis, Junior League, Rotary, etc.) to determine if they would consider sponsoring a workshop for their members. Perhaps a committee will arrange a meeting with a state legislator to develop a statewide benefit plan for child care/early childhood personnel or a loan forgiveness program for early childhood staff enrolled in state universities. No matter how large or small the idea, get started!

Workshop outline for parents

Parents can be important allies in the effort to expand sources of program income and improve recruitment and retention of qualified staff. With daily access to parents who experience the effects of the crisis firsthand, early childhood staff can exponentially expand the number of active advocates by enlisting parent support.

One key point to remember is that parents think of program costs from a *consumer* perspective. Regardless of their income, most parents think their child care costs are high. And, for many families, child care is among their largest expenses. Few parents realize the inadequacy of most staff salaries, know that benefits are often nonexistent, or recognize the disparities between the salaries of early childhood staff in centers compared with those in public school even when qualifications and responsibilities are similar. These facts—along with the knowledge of the harmful effects of staff turnover on program quality and therefore children—can help you gain parent support and action.

Purpose: *To help parents understand the relationship between quality, compensation, and affordability and understand the effects that inadequate staff salaries have on program quality and child outcomes. In addition, the workshop will encourage active parent support to expand program income sources beyond parent and staff contributions.*

Handout: *Where Your Child Care Dollars Go* brochure

1. Begin by showing the video, *Celebrating Early Childhood Teachers*. This video provides an upbeat view of the work of an early childhood teacher with sobering facts concerning the recruitment and retention crisis.

2. Following the video, discuss the facts. Talk about the local situation. Discuss how this crisis affects children from a developmental perspective. Share personal anecdotes from your program, and ask parents to share any firsthand experiences they had when a child's teacher left. How did it affect their family? Below are some points to talk about at the meeting (taken from *Raising Salaries: Strategies that Work*, published by the Child Care Employee Project).

   - Describe how parents and workers both suffer from the effects of an underfunded system. Child care workers are asked to subsidize the system with low wages because child care programs don't have sufficient money to adequately compensate them. Parents struggle to pay for child care and frequently have to accept lower quality care because they can't afford more.

   - Provide local and national data on salaries, benefits and working conditions and how these compare to other occupations.

   - Describe how high turnover and the teacher shortage resulting from child care workers' low wages, inadequate benefits and stressful working conditions have an impact on children and families:

   - High turnover means that children and families must continually adjust to new providers. A 42% annual turnover rate, the national average for center-based employees, means that more than four in every ten teachers leave their job in any given year. (Add local data from surveys to provide turnover rates for your community.)

- A teacher shortage means a shortage of trained providers. Children are in the hands of caregivers with less experience and training.

- A teacher shortage can also result in programs being understaffed so there are fewer teachers to care for the same numbers of children.

- High turnover means stress for people who remain in centers, resulting in less time and patience for children and parents.

- High turnover means that teachers and administrators are spending more time hiring and training new staff, time that is directly taken away from children.

3. Discuss strategies that parents can use to help their children deal with staff departures.

4. Discuss strategies parents can use to help the program deal with the issue. (The following ideas were taken from *Raising Salaries: What Works.*)

   - Encourage the parents to problem solve with you on how to raise salaries. They can do such things as fundraising or volunteering their services to decrease center expenditures.

   - Ask parents to acknowledge the commitment of staff. Parents at one program threw a party for the person who had been there the longest.

   - Involve parents in community events such as provider recognition days. Let them know how much you appreciate their support and that it will make a difference.

   - Encourage your parents to ask their own employers to help them pay for child care with flexible benefits, a Dependent Care Assistance Plan, or a Flexible Spending/Salary Reduction Account. The additional monies could then be targeted to staff increases.

   - Encourage parents to use their community clout to get their employers, charitable organizations or business or civic groups to address this issue of raising money to provide higher salaries.

   - Join in with your parents to publicize the salary crisis in the local media.

   - Become advocates with your parents. Find out what legislation exists on a local, state, or national level (e.g., the Act for Better Child Care Services) that addresses these problems. Write suggested legislation with local representatives if none exists. Mount a letter-writing campaign on behalf of favorable bills or politicians who support improved child care staff compensation.

5. Plan for implementing strategies. Once people are interested and have helped to brainstorm workable ideas, get a commitment for follow-through. It's best to get things going right away, rather than trying to recreate the enthusiasm at a later date.

Workshop outline for civic/voluntary organizations

Unlike groups of early childhood teachers or parents, many members of civic or voluntary groups will not have firsthand experience with early childhood programs, although the number that do is constantly increasing. The structure of these workshops must provide additional background information on early childhood programs—what they do and how they support so many families today. When considering which civic or voluntary organizations to approach, think about groups who are members of the Alliance for Better Child Care—a coalition of national organizations dedicated to working for the passage of a comprehensive child care bill in Congress. There are more than 120 such organizations (NAEYC's Public Affairs staff can identify these groups if you need assistance). In addition, many national organizations not actively supporting ABC have identified child care as an interest or focus. The Junior League, labor groups, the Chamber of Commerce, religious groups, and many others all have expressed interest in, and in some cases actively embraced, the issue of child care in recent years.

Purpose: *To help civic leaders understand the grave problems of recruitment and retention facing early childhood programs and the drain on program quality when qualified staff cannot be attracted or retained. The workshop is designed to elicit the active support of participants to implement strategies that will effectively address these problems.*

Possible handouts:
What Are the Benefits of High Quality Early Childhood Programs? (NAEYC brochure #540)
America's Future Depends on High Quality Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC brochure #632)
Where Your Child Care Dollars Go (NAEYC brochure #545)

1. Stress the importance of quality programs for young children.

   Open with statistics that document the rapid increase in use of early childhood programs, the increased labor force participation of mothers of young children due to economic necessity, and the increased recognition of the importance of quality educational experiences in the early years.

2. Talk about the ingredients of quality.

   Stress the importance of qualified, experienced staff, and the need for continuity in young children's lives. Talk about the fact that variables that affect quality—small group size and limited numbers of children per adult—make good quality more labor intensive and thus more expensive, but that the costs of low quality are even higher.

Choose among the following:

a. Talk about the links between program quality, compensation, and affordability.

   Describe how teachers have subsidized service provision through low wages and few benefits in an attempt to keep programs affordable given the lack of public funding.

b. Show *Celebrating Early Childhood Teachers* video.

   This video depicts the daily challenges and importance of working as an early childhood teacher, with sobering statistics on the problems created by low wages and inadequate benefits.

c. Have the audience try to describe a day in the life of an early childhood teacher. Then, go into explicit detail, as you describe a part of the day. You may want to have teachers available who can describe their day-to-day work. Talk about whether the average levels of compensation seem adequate for the responsibilities. Provide an overview of figures for comparable jobs with similar educational requirements and responsibilities. Discuss the disparities.

3. Brainstorm potential strategies and plan action.

One benefit from this type of brainstorming is that you are likely to bring new perspectives about the problem in your community. Also, such brainstorming can help participants feel ownership of the strategies generated and thus more likely to follow through with action. Finally, many civic organizations have members who are "movers and shakers" and are used to making things happen. Their involvement can be vital in creating local mechanisms for change.

4. End with commitments for action.

After brainstorming a list of potential strategies, follow up with commitments for action. End the meeting with each participant identifying one concrete action that they will take to begin to address the problem. This strategy is an effective way to move beyond talk and into *ACTION!*

Making News: An Affiliate Guide to Working with the News Media

by Rebecca Leet

Few issues have gained newsworthiness in recent years as those affecting young children. These are the very issues about which NAEYC members care deeply and about which they are experts. Affiliate Group leaders can become information resources for the news media and help ensure that local news stories on children's issues are as accurate, understandable, and helpful as possible. This Guide is intended to help you work effectively with the news media. It is purposefully brief and practically oriented. Some of the details may seem elementary, but they are necessary and should be observed carefully; extraneous suggestions have not been included.

The Guide is divided into two sections: what you should know before you start and how to the execute the basics of publicity. The first section is as important as the second; perhaps the greatest mistake made in seeking media attention is not taking the time to think through the objective and message before starting your effort.

The editor of your local newspaper just said you could have one headline and three sentences on the front page of the newspaper to say anything you want.

What do you say?
Why do you want to say it?

You should be able to answer the "what" and "why" questions *before* you ever approach a reporter or editor. Answering each question is essential to being well prepared and to using this scarce news opportunity as effectively as possible.

Both questions are equally important; do not assume that you know the goal of your communication. Assess your goal realistically; do not try to cover too much. Your three main points should fit in a headline and three sentences. Work within your Affiliate Group to decide what your goal is in seeking news coverage; then decide how to state your message.

For example, your goal may be to let the public know 4-year-olds are being tested inappropriately and that the results of such tests have the potential for labeling a child erroneously and negatively in later years. What public do you really want to reach? Parents? Educators? Public officials? Although you may want to raise the awareness of all three groups, only one will be your primary target. The kind of information you emphasize and the statements you make will be colored by your decision about which public you want to reach most.

What kind of action do you want to follow from your pronouncement? Do you want teachers to reconsider what they are doing? Or public school officials to change their procedures? Or parents to look into whether inappropriate testing is occurring with their children? Again, you may hope that several such actions flow from your public comments, but you should decide which action is the most important and gear your information selection and statements around sparking that action.

From information to news

For information to be transformed into news requires two things: action and public interest. Without public interest, virtually no information is reported by the news media. However, in addition to public interest, a news medium needs a reason for reporting a story today rather than next month; it needs, in the language of reporting, a "news peg."

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009
202-232-8777 800-424-2460 FAX 202-328-1846

Creating news pegs

Here are some ways that you can create a "news peg" to draw media coverage to an issue of Affiliate concern:

- Hold a press conference to announce the release of a report on the subject, to announce a position of the Affiliate Group on the issue, or to call on local officials to undertake action on the issue.

- Create an event by having a well-known expert from the community, or an important public official, make a speech about the issue.

- Take advantage of the "season" to attract public attention to the issue. For example, almost every newspaper prints back-to-school features around Labor Day. Plan ahead and suggest specific topics for that time. Similarly, if parents are signing up their toddlers for preschool in February, let editors know this and suggest that February is a good time to focus on how to choose a good preschool program. Or, suggest May as the time for articles related to appropriate uses of testing, since many schools screen students then for fall entry. The **Week of the Young Child** may be another "news peg" for papers to use.

- If the issue has become news nationally, call the newspaper and suggest to the editor or reporter that they do a story on how the issue is being handled locally. If an issue has been reported locally, call the editor or reporter *the day the story comes out* and ask if any follow-up stories are being done. If so, explain how your Affiliate Group can help provide information for subsequent stories.

Media listings and mailing lists

Each Affiliate Group should create a media listing notebook, that contains a mailing list of reporters and editors who should receive press releases. This notebook should also contain other important information on each newspaper, radio, and television outlet in the Affiliate Group area. Be sure this information is passed along to the next person in charge of media coverage whenever this office changes hands.

At least once a year, survey the news media outlets in your area and update all media listings. The lists are time-consuming to create, and it is best to gather the information *before* it is needed for a press release or other press event.

For newspapers

All daily and weekly newspapers in your Affiliate area should be included in your newspaper listing. Include the newspaper's name and address, the name or title of the person to whom a release should be mailed and her or his telephone number, and the paper's publication days and deadlines. If the newspaper publishes any special sections—on certain days of the week or at certain times of the year—these should also be noted, with their deadlines and contact persons. In large cities, the "coverage area" of the paper should also be listed. Papers do not cover news out of their area (for example, a suburban paper covering one suburb would not report on a story happening in another suburb).

For radio

All radio stations in your Affiliate area should be included in your listings, even if the station is not now broadcasting a local news program (next year it might, and when you update the list you will know to call it). The listing should include the station's call letters, address, telephone number, and the day and time of any special public affairs or interview programs broadcast. The listing should also include the name of the producer of each special program and the title of the person to whom releases should be sent (at radio stations, this is almost always the News Assignment Editor). Also include whether the station accepts public service announcements, and if so, to whom they should be sent (usually, the Public Service Director).

For television

The information for television stations is the same as for radio stations. In addition to asking about public service announcements, ask whether the TV station provides any "talk-back" opportunity for the public on any of their news shows (essentially a TV letter-to-the-editor) and find out the appropriate contact person.

Wire services

You should also determine whether the Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) have bureaus in your area and, if so, get their address, telephone number, and the name/title of the person to whom releases are to be sent.

Sample newspaper listing

1. Daily newspapers

Name *Address* *Contact* *Phone* *Publication deadline*

Special sections contact

Date of publication *Deadline* *Coverage*

2. Weekly newspapers

Name *Address* *Contact* *Phone* *Publication deadline*

Special sections contact

Date of publication *Deadline* *Coverage*

Interviewing

The key to a successful interview is knowing what you want to say, not in a general sense, but very specifically. Here are some interviewing tips:

- Before you seek a news interview, know exactly what information you want that reporter to report. Limit yourself to two or three main points, at most.
- Do not state your key points once and think the reporter caught them; use later questions to reiterate your most important facts or opinions.
- If the reporter has not asked about an area that you want covered, volunteer the information. Say something like, "There's an important area we haven't touched on, and that is. . ."
- Do not try to be an expert on everything. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. If you could easily find the answer, tell the reporter you will call back with the information. Then be sure to follow through!
- Suggest related stories, but do not be heavy handed. If the reporter/editor is not interested, do not persist.
- If, after the interview, you discover you made a factual mistake, call the reporter and correct your error. The reporter will have more, not less, regard for your credibility if you do this.
- If the reporter is writing furiously, trying to get down what you are saying, pause and let her or him catch up. Or speak more slowly. If you are uncertain whether the reporter understood what you said, say something like, "Let me say that another way..." and reiterate the thought.
- Above all, do not use jargon. If you must use a phrase or word with a technical meaning, explain it. Remember, everyday words for you may be jargon to those without a similar background. Will people really understand what you mean?
- If you are going to be interviewed by a television reporter and can prepare ahead of time, reduce your one or two main points to three sentences. Your remarks have a better chance of being used if they are only 20 to 30 seconds long.

The press release

You face the same challenge in writing a press release that a reporter faces in writing a story: How do you catch the readers' attention and hold it long enough to present your information? In this case, your reader is an editor or reporter.

Content

Not surprisingly, a good press release reads like a news story.

- It has a *headline* that grabs the attention of the reporter or editor. A good release will often carry virtually the same headline as the subsequent newspaper story.
- It is written in an *inverted pyramid style* with the most important information first and the remainder in descending order of importance. The first paragraph, called the lead, summarizes the major facts of the story and usually is no longer than two sentences.
- It uses *action verbs*. If possible, it conveys some of the information in quotations, to enliven the release. Quotations are always attributed.

Format

Editors and reporters are accustomed to seeing press releases in a standard format and are more likely to read ones presented to them in this manner.

- Follow the format in the sample press release below. Include the date of the release; the name, address, and telephone number of the originator; and the "release time."
- The "release time" should either be FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or should read HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL (give date and time of day for release).
- Type the release in a double-spaced format.
- Include an underlined *headline* in all caps.
- At the end of the release, type one of the following symbols to signify the end of your release: ### or -30-.
- If the release is more than one page in length, type —more— at the bottom of each non-final page.
- At the very end of the release (after you have typed ### or -30-), briefly describe your Affiliate Group. Include its purpose, size, and number of years in existence.

Model press release for Affiliate Groups

This model release is based on two news pegs. Peg #1 assumes your Affiliate has just completed a salary survey and is issuing its findings; the peg or "hook" for #2 is the Affiliate president's election.

Affiliate Group letterhead
Local Association for the Education of Young Children
1234 Main Street
Anytown, VA 22222

HOLD FOR RELEASE at 10 a.m.
Friday, June 2

MEDIA CONTACT:
Lola King 333-123-1234

WHO IS CARING FOR YOUR CHILD TODAY?

Throughout our city, the turnover rate among child care workers and early childhood teachers has reached the point where many children are having new caregivers thrust upon them every few months, according to [*News peg #1*: a new study recently completed by *or news peg #2:* the incoming president of] the Local Association for the Education of Young Children.

"The rapid turnover is the result of many factors," said Dr. Julie Anthony, LAEYC President, "but the primary one is low wages and poor benefits.

--more--

According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics for the country as a whole, even golf caddies and parking lot attendants earn more than caregivers in most licensed child care centers and preschools. The situation in our city (state) mirrors the national statistics."

[*News peg #1:* The new study found a xx% turnover rate in local child care centers and preschools, compared to a national rate of approximately 40%. The average teacher salary was found to be $xx,xxx. Local public school teachers average $xx,xxx in yearly wages. This discrepancy is made even greater because most child care programs operate year-round, unlike the 9-month schedule of public schools.]

"One of the most important things in a young child's life is having the consistent care of people who have grown to know and understand that child. This is impossible to accomplish when teachers and caregivers change so frequently," said Anthony, [*News peg #2:* elected today at the group's annual meeting as] president of LAEYC.

[*If using news peg #2, add this sentence:* Statistics from the State Employment Service show that the rate of turnover is very high.] *For either version*: For more information about this issue, contact the Local Association for the Education of Young Children at (phone number).

###

The Local Association for the Education of Young Children, an Affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), offers professional development opportunities to early childhood educators designed to improve the quality of services for children from birth through age 8—the critical years of development. Since *(year)*, LAEYC members have committed themselves to good programs for children and professional development for teachers, demonstrated through our local Affiliate services and resources.

The press conference

Next to press releases, press conferences are the most common technique for generating media stories. A successful press conference takes careful planning and attention to detail.

Organizing a press conference

The most critical decisions regarding your press conference are

- *Who will be your spokesperson?*

This must be someone who is articulate, knows the subject, and can think quickly on her or his feet to respond to reporters' questions. If your spokesperson is not an Affiliate officer, she or he should be introduced as an Affiliate member and spokesperson.

- *What time will your press conference be?*

The best time for a press conference is around 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. Avoid early morning (before 9 a.m.) or late afternoon (after 4 p.m.). Evening press conferences are *never* held, except for the President of the United States.

- *Where will your press conference be held?*

The easier it is for reporters to get there, the more likely they will be to show up. Do not hold your press conference in an out-of-the-way place. If the issue can be illustrated by staging the event at a particular site, consider holding it there—but carefully assess mitigating factors, such as the need for permission to hold it there, the possibility it could be rained out (if outdoors), or the distraction of surrounding noises.

Send an announcement of the press conference, including some information on the issue so that it *arrives* between 2 and 7 days before the event. Often the press release developed for the press conference will be sent, with a HOLD FOR RELEASE label (see the model press release on page 4). A cover sheet will state when and where the press conference will occur and will identify the spokesperson by name and title.

Follow up with a phone call to the appropriate person to make sure that the announcement was received and to see if additional information is needed.

Television stations will be much more interested in the press conference if there will be some action involved, rather than just someone standing up and speaking. If that is all your press conference will have, help the station find someplace it could go ahead of time (a day or two) to film people in action related to the issue. Having film footage with action is often the difference between getting on television or not.

Executing the press conference

If there is a good chance that the Affiliate spokesperson will be asked a question that she or he cannot answer, for whatever reason, have resource people at the press conference who can be called upon to answer questions.

Have extra copies of everything for the press: press releases, copies of the report (if one is released), copies of the opening statement, brochures describing the Affiliate, news clippings of related stories, etc.

Distribute copies of the opening statement a few minutes before the start of the press conference. The press conference should open with a statement of between 2 and 5 minutes. It should highlight the most important points of the Affiliate's action (a call for action, vote on an issue, findings of a study--whatever the reason for the press conference).

As much as possible, the spokesperson should avoid just reading the statement. Often this is the time when television and radio reporters will be taping what they need for their story and a "spoken" statement is much more effective than one that is "read."

Begin the press conference on time; certainly no more than 5 minutes late. End the press conference as soon as interest lags. Usually, press conferences last between 20 to 30 minutes.

Put on each chair at the press conference a sheet asking for the reporter's name, affiliation, phone number, and address, so that you can update your media list. Do not assume that this reporter replaces another from that paper who has covered you--they may represent different sections. After the press conference, follow up by calling to ask if this reporter rather than another should now be on your list.

Be prepared for follow-up work. Reporters may have questions no one at the press conference could answer; make sure that one or two people are available the rest of the day to handle additional media requests for interviews and information and to handle calls from the public prompted by the stories.

Editorials, guest columns, and letters to the editor

You can draw public attention to your Affiliate Group's position on important issues by taking advantage of editorials, guest columns or "op-eds," and letters to the editor.

Editorials

Most newspapers have a staff of several editorial writers, and usually each editorial writer has several issue areas that she or he writes about. With television stations, the Editorial Director usually writes all the editorials.

Although there are some exceptions, most good editorial writers will be open to hearing from you in the same way that reporters are. You should not be afraid to pick up the telephone and call an editorial writer to urge her or him to write about an issue or to give your Affiliate's position on an issue on which you suspect a story may be prepared. Almost always, editorials occur within a day or two of a news story on the same subject.

Deal with an editorial writer as you would a reporter. Offer to meet with her or him or to send information. Provide the same kind of data, explanation, and opinions as you would with a reporter. If you send the information, always follow up with a phone call to make sure it was received.

Guest columns

Most newspapers offer opportunities for experts to write guest editorial columns on important issues of the day; sometimes these are called "op-eds," a term originally coined because the columns were run on the page opposite the newspaper's editorial page. Now such columns may be run in different sections of the paper.

Increasingly, newspapers are seeking local experts to write these columns, although some of the largest newspapers—such as *The Washington Post, The New York Times*, and *The Los Angeles Times*—still prefer national experts. A call to the editorial page editor or the section's editor will clarify the paper's policy on guest columns. When you are creating your media listings, ask each newspaper what opportunities exist for writing guest columns. It may be that your paper runs columns in a different section from the editorials, such as the "Lifestyle" section.

Guest columns are usually written about issues that are in the news, though not always. A "timely" occasion, such as parents enrolling toddlers for preschool months ahead of time, may provide enough of a "news peg" for an editor to accept a guest column on the issue, even if the news editor does not consider it newsworthy enough for a story. Approach the editor like you would a reporter or news editor. Explain why something is timely and should be written about. Provide relevant data and present your credentials to persuade the editor that you would be a worthy writer for the column.

Do not expect to have a guest column accepted by the newspaper often. Once a year would be a very good track record. Don't give up if your first couple of ideas are rejected, or if your idea is accepted but the column you write is rejected. Ask an editor why a column was not run—it may not have been written in the style of most guest columns, or it could have been too lengthy, or maybe it didn't contain enough information. If you can learn from your failures you may succeed later in getting a guest column published.

Most guest columns are between 750 and 900 words long. Ask the editor how long the column should be before you start writing, and do not exceed the limit. Ask the editor what the deadline for submission is, and do not expect the piece to printed if you miss your deadline. Often you can use material prepared for another use, such as a speech, and rewrite it for publication as a guest column.

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor of a newspaper are, invariably, one of the best read sections of any newspaper. For this reason alone, they make an excellent place for Affiliate Groups to get the word out on issues you care about. Almost always, letters are accepted only in reaction to news stories in that paper.

There are several key factors to remember when writing a letter to the editor:

- Your letter to the editor should be in the mail the day the story appears—at the latest, mail it the following morning.

- Select the most important one or two points that you want to make and do so very briefly. Succinct letters have a better chance of being published than long ones.

- Don't expect more than two or, at most, three short paragraphs to be chosen from your letter. Many times it will only be one.

- Sign your name, and, if appropriate, identify yourself in a manner relevant to the issue (teacher, Affiliate president, etc.)

Public service announcements

A public service announcement (PSA) is a short 10- or 20-second spot similar to, and scheduled like, a commercial. PSAs are aired free of charge by radio stations. Their use varies greatly in different parts of the country. The best way to gauge whether stations in your area carry them is to listen for them.

PSAs are only used to announce information related to non-controversial issues. Likely topics include announcements of

- a brochure on choosing a good preschool

- workshops on starting a good child care program

- a Christmas telephone hotline to counsel parents on what toys are appropriate for different ages

Write the PSA exactly as you want it read. The broadcaster will read it directly from your copy.

Content

- Write conversationally, but include a lot of information.

- Include pertinent facts such as who, what, when, where, why, and how. If possible, repeat important telephone numbers and/or dates at the close.

- Start the PSA with a catchy phrase, if possible.

- Keep sentences short and the wording simple.

- PSAs must be precisely timed, at 10, 20, or 30 seconds. Send PSAs of all lengths to each station.

Format

- Follow the format in the example on the right for the release date, name, address, and telephone number of the originator.

- Indicate the length, in seconds, of the PSA.

- Type the PSA, double-spaced.

Television stations also broadcast PSAs, but less frequently. The cost of producing broadcast-quality PSAs for television is beyond most Affiliate budgets. However, Affiliate Groups may purchase PSAs developed by NAEYC and have them personalized for individual Affiliate Group use.

Sample radio PSAs

10 seconds

LOOKING FOR THE BEST CHILD CARE FOR YOUR BABY? THE DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN WANTS TO HELP YOU. CALL 234-5555 FOR THEIR FREE BROCHURE.

20 seconds

ARE YOU TRYING TO FIND THE BEST CHILD CARE PROGRAM FOR YOUR BABY OR TODDLER? GET HELP FROM THE EXPERTS. THE DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN HAS A FREE BROCHURE ON THE SUBJECT. JUST CALL 234-5555 FOR YOUR COPY. THAT'S 234-5555.

30 seconds

IF YOU'RE LIKE MOST WORKING PARENTS, ONE OF YOUR BIGGEST WORRIES IS CHILD CARE. NOW THERE IS A FREE BROCHURE, FROM CHILD CARE EXPERTS, TO HELP YOU ASSESS WHETHER YOU HAVE THE BEST CARE FOR YOUR BABY OR TODDLER. IT'S FREE FOR THE ASKING FROM THE DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN. FOR A COPY, CALL 234-5555. OR WRITE THE ASSOCIATION AT 98765 AMERICA STREET, DOWNTOWN, OHIO 45444. THAT PHONE NUMBER AGAIN IS 234-5555.

Quality, Compensation, and Affordability in Early Childhood Programs

Board Approves Long-Range Plan

At their July meeting the NAEYC Governing Board reaffirmed its commitment to addressing issues related to quality, compensation, and affordability. The Working Group on Quality, Compensation, and Affordability was established as an advisory panel to function "as long as the issue of recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood program staff remains a priority for NAEYC." Composed of Board and non-Board members appointed by the NAEYC President, the Panel will have two major responsibilities. The Panel will advise NAEYC staff and Board on such matters as priorities for action, position statements, and Association plans in this area. The Panel will also work in conjunction with staff and other members as appropriate to plan and implement activities such as the drafting of position statements, development of resources, compilation of information, and conduct of training and technical assistance.

The Board also adopted a statement of assumptions, goals, and strategies related to QCA issues. This document was drafted by the Working Group on Quality, Compensation, and Affordability and received extensive review and comment by more than 60 interested Affiliate Groups and individual members prior to its adoption. The Board also directed staff to work in conjunction with the Advisory Panel to develop a detailed workplan of QCA activities for the coming year. This plan will be presented to the Board in November.

A Statement of Guiding Assumptions, Long Term Goal, and Strategies for 1988-91

The supply and quality of early childhood programs are being strangled by an inability to attract and retain qualified employees. This problem exists because of the inadequate compensation, low status, and poor working conditions which typify the field. Combined with an unprecedented demand for services, this constitutes a crisis for the early childhood profession and the nation.

This document will guide NAEYC's response to this crisis. It takes into account our belief that the recruitment and retention problem is rooted in the nation's failure to recognize and respond to three interconnected needs—quality for children, equitable compensation for employees, and affordability for families.

The document has three parts: (1) a long-term goal; (2) a set of guiding assumptions; and (3) a statement of the strategies NAEYC will emphasize during 1988-91 as the Association affirms that solving this crisis is essential to America's present and future. In addition to this statement, NAEYC will evaluate preceding efforts and develop specific workplans on an annual basis. These plans will include specific objectives, timelines, and activities. They will also affirm the need for NAEYC to collaborate with other organizations that have special expertise, such as the Child Care Employee Project, in order to maximize our resources while avoiding duplication of effort.

***Note:** For the purposes of this statement, **early childhood programs** refers to all programs serving children ages 0-8 that suffer problems in attracting and retaining qualified employees. While not excluding public school programs fitting that definition, it is recognized that the crisis is more severe in family day care, child care, preschool, Head Start, and other prekindergarten programs. **Employees** are persons who are either self-employed or hired by these programs in instructional or administrative roles. **Compensation** includes salaries or wages and fringe benefits.*

Long-Term Goal

It is NAEYC's goal to assure that the:

* compensation and status for persons who work in early childhood programs are sufficiently high and the working conditions sufficiently positive to attract and retain qualified individuals for all instructional and administrative roles;
* compensation earned by these persons is equitable, based on their actual and required responsibilities, preparation, and experience; and
* cost of appropriate compensation and working conditions is shared equitably among all sectors of society.

Assumptions

NAEYC's efforts to achieve the above goal are based upon the following assumptions:

(a) High quality early childhood programs are in the best interest of the general public since they help children become competent learners and good citizens, reduce later school failure, and allow parents to work. This is not widely understood or acknowledged.

(b) The turnover and lack of training within the current early childhood workforce threatens program quality and therefore the public's interests.

(c) The greatest barriers to creating a trained and stable workforce are the low compensation, low status, and poor working conditions pervasive in early childhood programs.

(d) Compensation for individuals working in early childhood programs must be commensurate with their skills and qualifications and reflect the importance and responsibilities of the work performed.

Assumptions, continued

(e) The opportunity for career advancement will contribute to the recruitment and retention of qualified persons.

(f) A sufficient supply of high quality early childhood programs cannot exist until persons who work in them are no longer forced to subsidize program costs by accepting inappropriate wages and working conditions.

(g) Too few persons who work in early childhood programs are involved in efforts to improve their compensation and working conditions. Many do not see such involvement as helpful to their status or effectiveness. This must be changed.

(h) Solutions will demand a broad coalition of parents who use early childhood programs, the persons who work in these programs, employers, and policymakers. Strategies for motivating these various constituencies to action should recognize their differing interests.

(i) More revenue must be drawn to the field, with its primary target being the improvement of compensation and working conditions for persons who work in early childhood programs.

(j) Certain families can and must pay more for early childhood programs. But many families will be unable to afford the full cost of quality programs. This will require increases in public and private funding for these families and the programs serving them.

(k) Individuals and groups, particularly at the local and state levels, must be empowered with information and tools that help them to address this issue.

Strategies NAEYC will Emphasize for 1988-1991

1. Emphasize for all members that addressing the issue of recruitment and retention of qualified persons to work in early childhood programs is a top priority for NAEYC at this time.

2. Improve the capacity at the NAEYC, Affiliate, and member levels to conduct both political and public relations efforts related to this priority.

3. Conduct and support political and public relations efforts to address this priority.

Possible Affiliate Activities to Support QCA Goals

• Feature keynote speakers, seminars, and conference sessions on this topic and include discussion groups for members, parents, and community leaders in your workshop schedules.

• Include articles in your Affiliate journal or newsletter on this topic.

• If your Affiliate has not yet done so, appoint a person responsible for QCA issues and provide contact information to NAEYC's Information Service. Some Affiliates have appointed task groups specific to this issue.

• Publicize NAEYC's resources related to the QCA issue. A reproducible flyer describing these resources is available from the NAEYC Information Service at no charge. Make copies of the flyer and distribute it widely in your community.

• Develop contacts with local, state, and regional organizations with whom coalitions can further the success of your activities. Such groups include:
  - chapters/offices of national advocacy/policy analysis organizations (e.g. Children's Defense Fund, National Black Child Development Institute, Family Resource Coalition)
  - state and local advocacy organizations, coalitions, or task forces focusing on children, family, education, and/or economic development issues
  - education-related organizations (e.g. state and local boards of education, elementary principals' and teachers' associations, Head Start associations, family day care organizations, resource and referral organizations, parent groups, groups for special needs children and their families.)
  - business and labor organizations
  - church-related organizations
  - civic and service organizations.

• Encourage media coverage of the issue in local newspapers and on radio talk shows or television programs. Use NAEYC resources to provide the background information you need.

• Consider implementing a state or local survey of staff salaries and benefits if you aren't already doing so. All Affiliate QCA designees and Presidents of Groups without a QCA designee received a complimentary copy of the Child Care Employee Project salary survey instruction booklet and instrument this summer. Many groups are now undertaking such surveys. Your group can too!

Viewpoint

TWELVE REASONS FOR THE LOW WAGES IN CHILD CARE

Kathy Modigliani

Low child care wages are a critical component of the growing crisis in recruitment and retention of qualified child care professionals.[1] Low wages make the occupation unattractive to new workers, and they force experienced child care professionals to leave the field, often reluctantly. The people who take care of our young children are paid less than those who take care of our animals or our cars.[2] In fact, child care is the second most underpaid occupation in the United States.[3] Why is this so? Let us take a look at current reality and examine the causes that shadow our work with young children.

1. **More than 95% of early childhood professionals are women.**[4] Wage discrimination in occupations with high percentages of female workers is well documented.
2. **Most families say that child care fees "must come out of the mother's paycheck."** The inequitable pay received by women strikes a second blow to child care budgets.[5] Many mothers—themselves poorly paid—feel that "it hardly pays to work, once you've paid for child care" and are unable or unwilling to give over more of their hard-earned income for fee increases. In such families, the idea that the father's earnings are equally dependent upon paid child care is not recognized.
3. **Until recently, this labor-intensive work was usually provided by the mother "for free."**[6] Thus, it is difficult for many people to understand why child care costs so much, even when it is not fairly compensated.
4. **Informal family day care providers still offer care at less than a living wage.** This sets a low bottom line for child care fees. As long as some providers offer low-cost care, others are pressured to keep their fees low.
5. **Child care is an extremely labor-intensive service.** The total income of each teacher or provider must be paid by only a few parents.[7] One worker can take care of only a few young children, compared to perhaps 100 animals or cars per day. And in a consumer society like our own, people are usually willing to pay more for goods than services.
6. **Parents' earnings are relatively low.** At the time of their lives when they must pay for child care, young parents have less job experience and seniority than the average wage earner, and therefore receive less income.
7. **Parents must usually manage child care expenses with little if any support from the government.** Only college costs put a similiar burden on parents; however, the government offers extensive grant and loan programs to help pay for college expenses. In all other Western industrialized countries, as well as many Third World countries, governments provide substantial assistance to working parents.[8]
8. **Child care providers are reluctant to raise fees because they understand what a substantial bite child care now takes from the average family's disposable income.**[9] As people inclined to take care of others, sometimes to a fault, they sacrifice their own incomes instead.

[1]Whitebook, M. (1986). The teacher shortage: A professional precipice. *Young Children, 41*(4), 10–11.
Willer, B. (1987). *The growing crisis in child care: Quality, compensation, and affordability in early childhood programs.* Washington, DC: NAEYC.

[2]Modigliani, K. (1986). But who will take care of the children: Child care, women, and devalued labor. *Journal of Education, 168*(3), 46–69.

[3]National Committee on Pay Equity. (1987). *Pay equity: An issue of race, ethnicity and sex.* Washington, DC: Author.

[4]Bureau of Labor Statistics. (1986). *Occupational projections and training data* (Bulletin 2251). Washington, DC: Department of Labor.

[5]Zinsser, C. (1986). *Day care's unfair burden: How low wages subsidize a public service.* New York: Center for Public Advocacy Research.

Kathy Modigliani, *doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan, is conducting a study of job satisfaction and commitment in early childhood teachers. She is co-author of NAEYC's new* Opening Your Door to Children: How To Start a Family Day Care Program. *The author thanks Clark Anderson, Samuel Meisels, Valerie Polakow, and Marcy Whitebook for their suggestions about this article.*

[6]Benson, C. (1985). *Who cares for kids? A report on child care providers.* Washington, DC: National Commission on Working Women.

[7]Gwen Morgan, personal communication, September 2, 1986.

[8]Hewlett, S. A. (1986). *A lesser life: The myth of women's liberation in America.* New York: Warner.

[9]After housing, and perhaps food, child care is typically a young family's greatest expense.

9. Most early childhood teachers enjoy working with young children, and in the past they have been willing to accept low wages in exchange for satisfying work. Often these teachers have been women who were willing and able to be financially dependent on their husbands. Today, increasing numbers of women need to, or choose to, contribute their share to family income by seeking higher-paying jobs. This is a major factor in the teacher shortage.[10]

10. Child care professionals have not usually organized around the issue of compensation.[11] Few child care teachers and fewer family day care providers belong to any related organization.[12] There are few unionized workers because child care professionals are pessimistic about where the money for raises will come from and fear that unions will initiate an adversarial relationship with parents. The small, decentralized nature of most child care programs makes the system structurally difficult to organize.[13]

[10]Modigliani, 1986.

[11]Child Care Employee Project. (1986). *Unionizing: A guide for child care workers.* Berkeley, CA: Author.

[12]Even though NAEYC has an impressive 55,000 plus membership, this is only a small fraction of the more than 1½ million child care workers and preschool teachers in the United States.
Current Population Survey. (1987). *Employment and earnings: Annual report for 1985, 34*(1). Washington, DC: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, pp. 179, 181.

[13]Modigliani, 1986.

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11. Young children are devalued in this culture, cherished myths aside.[14] We do not commit resources to children as readily as to other priorities. It is easier to see one's investment in a car than in a baby's care. We do not respect the skills that qualified child care professionals bring to their work—"Anybody can watch children. . . ." Many parents and policymakers are unaware of the components of quality care and do not understand its importance to a child's development and well-being.

12. Historically, child care as paid labor has been performed by lower class domestics and servants. Although preschool teachers have sometimes been paid semiprofessional wages since World War II, the majority of babysitters and day care workers have been relegated to the wage and status levels of menial laborers.

In conclusion, the reasons behind workers' low pay are the inequitable wages of women, the devaluation of children in this culture, and the subsequent minimization of the skill involved in working with children. These cultural values are sustained by the decentralization of the occupation and the accommodating nature of the women who choose this work in the context of the gender and class inequities of our society and public policy indifference to women, children, and families.

[14]Modigliani, 1986.

List of Additional Resources

In addition to the materials listed on the separate brochures from NAEYC and the Child Care Employee Project, the following resources are excellent sources of additional information on issues related to the recruitment and retention crisis.

"But Who Will Take Care of the Children? Childcare, women, and devalued labor" (1986), by Kathy Modigliani, in *Journal of Education*, volume 168, number 3, 46-68.
This article outlines the underlying systemic roots of the low pay and public regard for child care, with an in-depth analysis of one community and interviews of providers from across the country.

***Day Care's Unfair Burden: How Low Wages Subsidize a Public Service* (1987), by Caroline Zinsser, Center for Public Advocacy Research, 12 West 37th Street, New York, NY 10018**
Cost: $3.
This research report of a study of child care workers in New York documents the implications of inadequate compensation.

***High Skill and Low Pay: The Economics of Child Care Work* (1989), by Heidi I. Hartmann & Diana M. Pearce, Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1400 20th Street, Suite 104, Washington, DC 20036.**
Commissioned by the Child Care Action Campaign as a briefing paper for a national conference on the economics of child care in 1988, this paper provides an excellent review of the discrepancies between wages and qualifications in the early childhood field.

"Mommy, Who's Going to be My Teacher Today?" Assessing Teacher Turnover (1989), by Marcy Whitebook and Robert C. Granger, *Young Children*, May 1989.
This article considers the importance of staff stability to program quality for young children and suggests several ways to measure retention, with recommendations for the most appropriate use of different measures.

Taking Action: A Proposal for Improving Compensation in the Early Childhood Field through Employee Activism (1989), written by Jim Morin for the WECA Commission on Improving Compensation in the Early Childhood Field. Available from Wisconsin Early Childhood Association/AEYC, 1245 East Washington, Madison, WI 53703.

This handbook is designed for easy use by early childhood employees. It outlines the reasons for the crisis in staffing, challenges often-held assumptions, and provides specific suggestions for promoting change through increased efforts by early childhood staff.

***Who Is Teaching?: Early Childhood Teachers in New York City's Publicly Funded Programs* (1988), by Robert C. Granger and Elisabeth Marx, Bank Street College of Education, 610 W. 112th Street, New York, NY 10025.**
This report discusses the links between quality and compensation and provides information on the differences in reward and qualifications among program staff across administrative auspices. The links between compensation and teacher attitude, work force stability, and staff vacancies are also considered along with suggested policy recommendations.

Feedback Sheet
QCA Action Kit

1. How did you use these materials?

2. Which parts of the materials were most useful? Why?

3. Which parts need to be modified? How?

4. What things are missing?

5. Did you develop additional materials to use with these resources? (Describe)

6. Would technical assistance be useful?

7. Other comments:

Return to: NAEYC/QCA, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009
202-232-8777 800-424-2460

Child Care Employee Project

The Child Care Employee Project (CCEP) is a non-profit advocacy organization working to improve the wages, status and working conditions of the child care profession.

Organized in 1977 by child care workers, CCEP provides assistance each year to thousands of child care providers, administrators, parents and educators. CCEP works with government agencies, community organizations, policy makers, unions, employers and the media on local and national issues that affect the child care workforce.

We believe the quality of care children receive is directly linked to the wages, status and working conditions of their providers.

The work of CCEP is supported by memberships, donations, and grants from private and public foundations.

Activities and Resources

☐ **ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZING**
The Project joins with other local and national organizations working to increase the availability of high quality, affordable child care. CCEP also facilitates the formation of support networks which enable child care workers to advocate for themselves.

☐ **SPEAKERS' BUREAU**
Project staff and speakers are available to participate in or coordinate workshops, meetings, hearings, conferences, classes and other events that promote the improvement of the wages, status and working conditions of child care providers.

☐ **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
Project staff provide technical assistance by telephone, mail and in-person. Requests for information and assistance focus on:

- Effective personnel policies (including breaks, grievance procedures, staff evaluation, and salary plans)
- Legal rights and liabilities of child care employees
- Current data on child care salaries, benefits and staff turnover

☐ **TRAINING**
The Project develops and conducts pre-service and in-service training programs on topics such as occupational health and safety, advocacy, communication skills, employment rights and personnel policies.

☐ **CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE NEWS**
The Project publishes a national newsletter available with CCEP membership or by request.

☐ **PUBLICATIONS**
Booklets, curriculum articles and information sheets on topics concerning child care as an occupation are available for use by individuals, organizations, and college classes. (See Publications List)

☐ **RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION**
In order to encourage accurate documentation of child care working conditions, the Project designs and implements wage surveys and provides technical assistance to other groups undertaking similar projects.

CCEP conducts research and acts as a clearinghouse for data on the child care workforce.

The Issues

High quality child care depends on well-trained and experienced staff, BUT...

Poor pay, lack of benefits, stressful working conditions and low professional status deter qualified people from entering or staying in the field.

High turnover among child care providers undermines the stability and dependability of services available to children and families.

Child care services help families achieve economic independence, BUT...

Over 70% of all child care workers earn incomes below the poverty level.

Most child care workers are women struggling to support themselves and their families.

Child care is already too expensive for many families, BUT...

Child care fees would be even higher if they were not subsidized by the low wages and limited benefits given to providers.

The high cost of care does not mean that child care workers are paid well.

The goal of CCEP is to improve the wages, status and working conditions of all child care providers in order to ensure that high quality care is available to all families regardless of economic status.

□ Child Care Employee Project
P.O. Box 5603
Berkeley, CA 94705

Child Care Employee Project

□ Child Care Employee Project
P.O. Box 5603
Berkeley, CA 94705
415/653-9889

Publications

RAISING SALARIES: STRATEGIES THAT WORK
A discussion of policies that have been implemented to raise salaries of child care staff. Includes 18 examples of public and private initiatives aimed at upgrading salaries in child care programs.

Please send _____ copies @ $5.00 each = $_____

SALARY SURVEYS: HOW TO CONDUCT ONE IN YOUR COMMUNITY
A guide to conducting a salary and benefits survey and making the results work for you. Includes sample survey instrument.

Please send _____ copies @ $5.00 each = $_____

COMPARABLE WORTH: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR CHILD CARE STAFF
History and legal implications of comparable worth, descriptions of successful applications of comparable worth by child care advocates, and methods for assessing the appropriate strategy for your situation.

Please send _____ copies @ $3.00 each = $_____

UNIONIZING: A GUIDE FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS
An overview of the topic including discussions of collective bargaining, choosing a union, issues in organizing, and union contracts.

Please send _____ copies @ $4.00 each = $_____

A GOOD SUB IS HARD TO FIND
Strategies for recruiting and retaining substitute staff for child care programs.

Please send _____ copies @ $4.00 each = $_____

REPORTING LICENSING AND OTHER VIOLATIONS IN CALIFORNIA CHILD CARE PROGRAMS: AN EMPLOYEE'S RIGHT
A guide to the section of the California Health and Safety Code which protects child care staff from employer retaliation when reporting licensing violations.

Please send _____ copies @ $1.00 each = $_____

Advocacy Curricula

WORKING FOR QUALITY CHILD CARE
An early childhood education text designed to help students and child care staff become effective advocates for improving quality, salaries and working conditions in child care programs. The curriculum is written in three units for use in ECE Introduction, Work Experience and Administration classes. The text format is 8½" × 11" with a 3-hole punch for use in a looseleaf binder. An instructor's guide is available free-of-charge for instructors who adopt the text for their classes.

Unit I: TEACHING IN CHILD CARE TODAY

A. STATE OF THE FIELD
Provides students with literature on the issues affecting the child care profession.

B. WORKING FOR CHANGE
Focuses on strategies to improve salaries and working conditions.

Please send _____ copies @ $6.00 each = $_____

Unit II: CREATING A BETTER WORK ENVIRONMENT

A. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS ON THE JOB
Outlines state and federal labor laws affecting center staff, substitutes and in-home caregivers.

B. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS
Discusses strategies for improving relationships among staff and between parents and staff.

C. STAYING HEALTHY
Examines the health and safety concerns of child care staff.

Please send _____ copies @ $8.00 each = $_____

Unit III: MANAGING A QUALITY PROGRAM

A. WAGES AND BENEFITS
Includes information on salary schedules, health coverage and pension plans.

B. PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Discusses various center policies and how they can be implemented.

Please send _____ copies @ $6.00 each = $_____

- **BEYOND JUST WORKING WITH KIDS: PREPARING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS TO ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES AND OTHERS**

A curriculum guide for early childhood education classes containing over 100 resources and activities to help students and child care workers become effective advocates for improving quality, status and working conditions in child care.

Please send _____ copies @ $4.00 each = $_____

Article Reprints

CCEP has many articles and reports providing background information on salaries and working conditions of the child care profession; how these issues relate to program quality; statistics on salaries and benefits in communities throughout the country; and strategies for improving salaries and policies within child care programs. A list of these articles and reports is available free-of-charge from CCEP.

☐ Please send me a free list of current CCEP articles and reports.

T-shirts

"Rights, Raises, Respect!"—Adult sizes: S, M, L, XL. Colors: red, purple, turquoise, white, lilac. Specify 2nd and 3rd color choices.

SIZE	COLOR	2nd CHOICE	3rd CHOICE
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Please send _____ shirts @ $8.00 each = $_____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

(all prices include postage): $_____

CCEP Materials

The Child Care Employee Project is a national organization devoted to improving child care working conditions through research, advocacy, training, consultation, and distribution of a newsletter and other printed materials.

To order materials, include check or money order payable to: **Child Care Employee Project**. Mail to **CCEP, P.O. Box 5603, Berkeley, CA 94705**. For bulk orders (10 copies or more), please contact CCEP office for reduced rates. Prices listed are suggested donations.

_____
NAME

_____
ADDRESS

_____
CITY STATE ZIP

CCEP Membership

Receive a one year subscription to Child Care Employee News & support CCEP's advocacy efforts for improved wages, status and working conditions. Organization Center membership includes 2 subscriptions.

☐ $100 year—Sustaining Membership
☐ $35 year—Organization Center Membership
☐ $50 year—Supporting Membership
☐ $25 year—Regular Membership
☐ $15 year—Low Income Membership

_____
NAME

_____
ADDRESS

_____
CITY STATE ZIP

Enclosed for membership: $_____

The Crisis Is Real

Demographics on the Problems of

Recruiting & Retaining Early Childhood Staff

by Barbara A. Willer and Lynn C. Johnson

We are in the midst of a national crisis—a crisis in recruiting and retaining the qualified staff needed to provide good early childhood services for children and their families—due primarily to the inadequate compensation received by many early childhood staff. While increasing recognition is given to the importance of high quality child care and early education, the public is not widely aware of how serious the problems of recruitment and retention are—and how devastating the impact is on program quality.

The problems are especially severe in family day care, child care, preschool, Head Start, and other prekindergarten programs. Unlike public schools, with a continuing and largely stable source of funding, most other early childhood programs rely on parent fees. Publicly funded programs outside the public school (Head Start or Title XX-funded programs) are typically underfunded, serving a fraction of eligible children. Given limited public dollars and stretched family budgets, program staff often subsidize services by accepting compensation far below the value of their work.

Early childhood practitioners are well aware of the recruitment and retention crisis. Daily, program directors are making endless phone calls to find substitute staff, juggling administrative and teaching responsibilities, or limiting enrollments due to ongoing teacher vacancies. The lucky ones who find replacements must cope with the increased responsibilities of orienting and training new staff members. Teachers must cope with increased responsibilities due to staff vacancies and the confusion of transitions. Worst of all, young children, for whom continuity in caregivers is absolutely essential, must deal with a veritable merry-go-round of caregivers as new teachers come and go throughout the year.

Good Programs Equal Good Teachers

The staff recruitment and retention crisis is devastating because the most important factor in determining the quality of an early childhood program is the quality of the staff. Children do best when a sufficient number of trained and experienced adults are consistently available. Teachers/caregivers must understand how young children grow and learn and how to teach them accordingly. Because young children need close adult attention to assure their safety and help them thrive, total group size and number of children per adult must be limited.

Who Cares for Children

The early childhood profession does not distinguish between care and education for young children, believing that both are equally important in good programs. With more than half of all mothers of preschool children in the labor force and the benefits of good early education programs well known, separating "care" and "education" fails to have any meaning. Good services for young children provide both child care *and* appropriate education.

This belief is not reflected in the occupational and industry data upon which most national employment statistics are based. Some who work with children are counted as "service" workers; others are counted as "educators," even if they do the same work. Despite its limitations, government occupational data provides the best national picture of the early childhood workforce. This brochure outlines the available data and provides estimates of basic worker characteristics. One fact is abundantly clear: those who work with young children receive too little reward for their work compared to those in similar occupations or the average worker.

Early Childhood Occupation Definitions

The following categories are used by the federal government for data collection.

Child Care Worker—service workers who provide care and education in child care facilities, including private homes, churches, and workplaces. Child care workers also work in social services, residential care, and government . Family day care providers are included here, although their numbers are probably underestimated. Many counted as child care workers are not typically recognized as such: lunchroom monitors, school bus drivers, caregivers in residential homes, and foster parents.

Child Care Worker, Private Household—service workers who provide care *in the child's home* as a babysitter, infant nurse, nanny, tutor, or governess (excluding family day care where children are in the provider's home.) This type of arrangement constitutes only about 5% of all current child care arrangements. Most in this category do not have specialized training and are not early childhood professionals. This type of child care—a private family arrangement not subject to public regulation—is excluded in the following analyses.

Teacher, Preschool, Prekindergarten, and Kindergarten—educators who provide care and early education to preschoolers and kindergarteners in a program affiliated with or defined as a school. Teachers in a nursery school, Head Start program, or a preschool are counted here. Because many child care programs also provide these same services, but may not define their program as a school, it is unclear whether their staff (who may or may not define themselves as teachers) are counted in this category or as child care workers.

Teacher, Elementary—educators who work with children in elementary schools, grades one through eight. NAEYC considers teachers in the primary grades (first through third) as members of the early childhood profession.

Teacher Aide—workers who assist teachers in the classroom or supervise students in other school settings. Other responsibilities include nonteaching and clerical tasks. Teacher aides work in private and public schools as well as child care centers. While not all work with young children (age eight or under), many do.

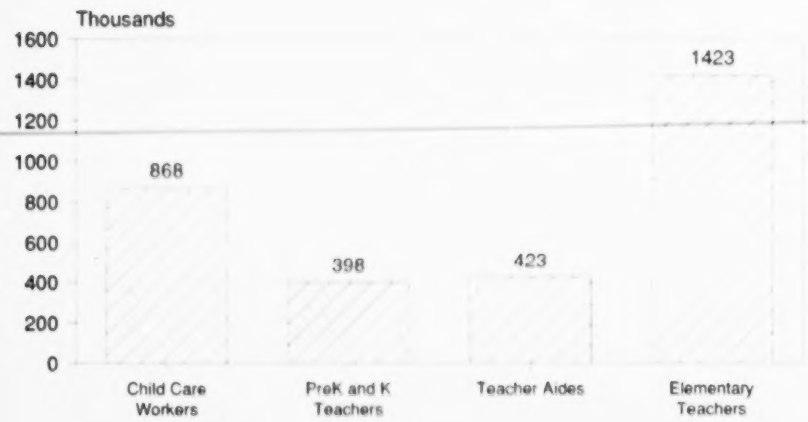

Figure 1 illustrates the numbers of workers in the categories which include early childhood professionals. However, as described in the definitions above, other workers are also counted in these categories. It is very difficult to estimate the total number of early childhood workers because of the overlap. Also, family day care providers, an important component of the child care market, are likely to be underestimated in employment surveys because they are self–employed.

Figure 1. Number of Workers in Selected Occupations Working With Children; source: 1988 Current Population Survey, unpublished analyses

Characteristics of Early Childhood Workers

Gender

Across categories, women comprise the overwhelming majority of early childhood workers. Between 96% and 98% of child care workers and prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers are women. Among elementary teachers, 85% are female. As in other fields which are predominately female, compensation is seldom equal to worth.

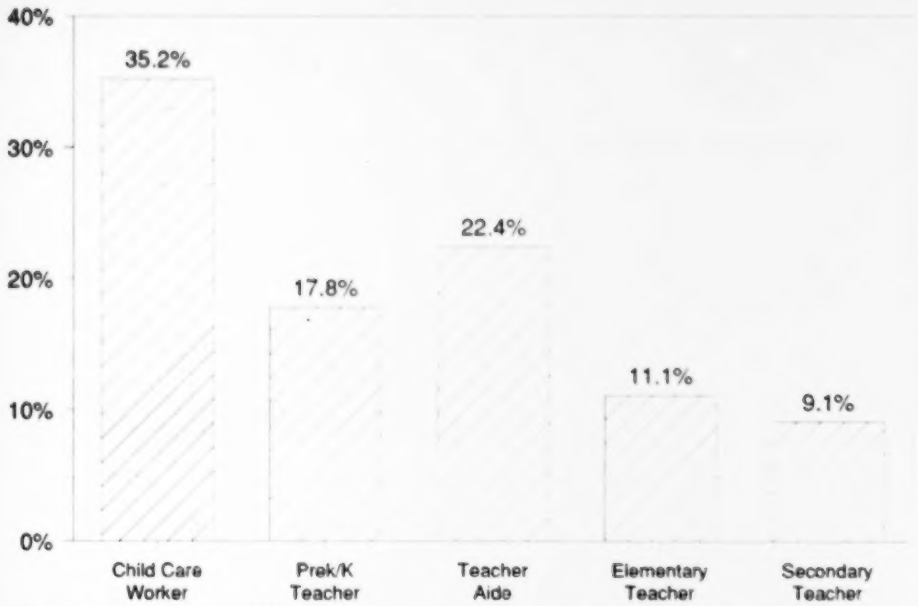

Figure 7. Percentage of Workers Leaving the Field from 1986 to 1987; source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Projections and Training Data, unpublished analyses

Like the data on occupational tenure, information on separation rates clearly indicates that those occupations with higher average wages also have lower rates of separation. Once again, a reminder is necessary that occupational figures are in fact a low estimate, because they do not capture those workers who move from job to job within the occupation.

Occupation Growth

The tremendous growth in child care and early education services that has occurred over the last decade is expected to continue. Based on Bureau of Labor projections for the year 2000, the demand for child care workers will grow by at least 20%, while demand for preschool teachers increase by at least 36%. This demand reflects both the anticipated continued growth in the number of preschool children with mothers in the labor force, illustrated in Figure 8, and the growing percentage of children enrolled in group programs prior to school entry.

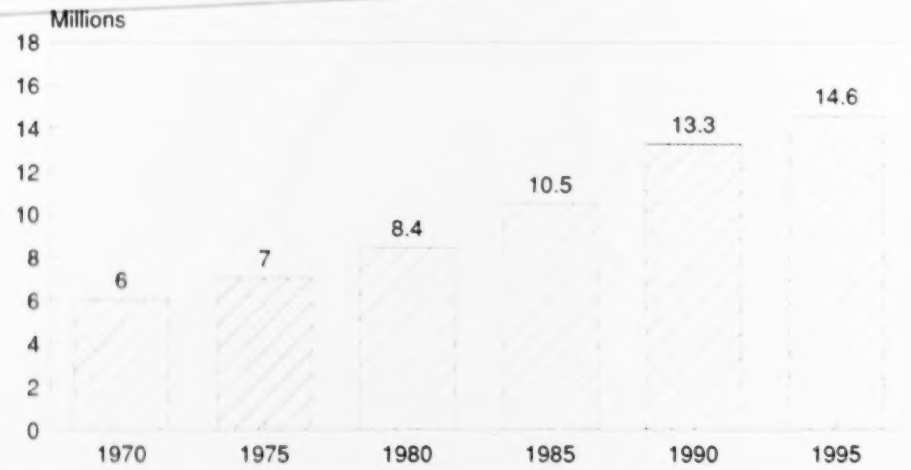

Figure 8. Number of Preschool Children with Mothers in the Labor Force, 1970-1995; source: Prepared by Sandra Hofferth for testimony before the House Select Committee on Children, Youth & Families. Hearings on ***American Families in Today's Economy****, July 1, 1987.*

Percentage of Full-time Workers

The salary estimates presented on the bottom of page 3 are based on full-time workers. Because a large number of early childhood workers are employed on a part-time basis, these already low figures overestimate the income of a significant portion of the early childhood workforce.

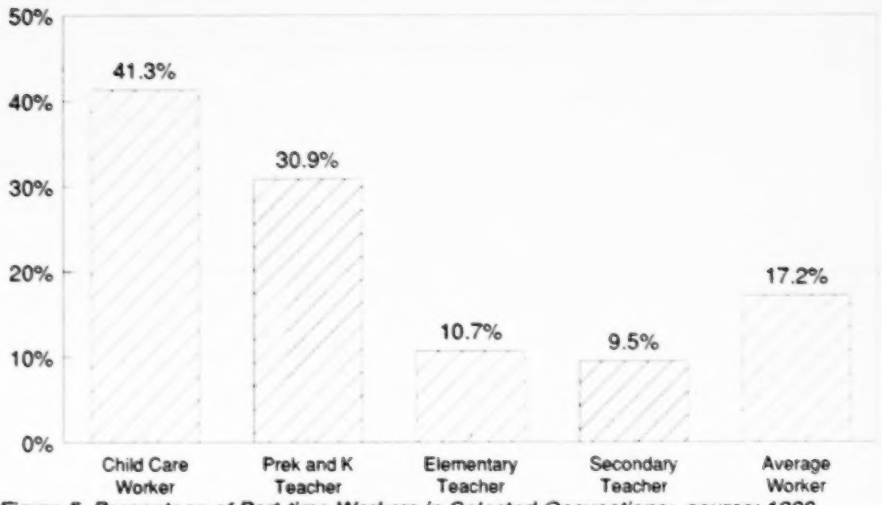

Figure 5. Percentage of Part-time Workers in Selected Occupations; source: 1988 Current Population Survey; unpublished analyses

Benefits

Few national data are available on the provision of benefits packages to early childhood personnel. When local surveys of early childhood personnel outside the public school are analyzed (Hartmann & Pearce, 1989), the lack of even the most basic benefits is quickly apparent. Although over two-thirds of full-time workers in the private sector receive health benefits, with the majority of premiums paid by the employer, local surveys of early childhood personnel consistently report that only between one-third to half of these workers receive health benefits (Hartmann & Pearce, 1989). The lack of health benefits is particularly a problem, given the risk of disease transmission to children. Concern about infectious disease in child care continues to grow as more and more young children, especially infants, participate in group programs. Yet, an effective means of risk reduction is ignored when teachers have no health benefits.

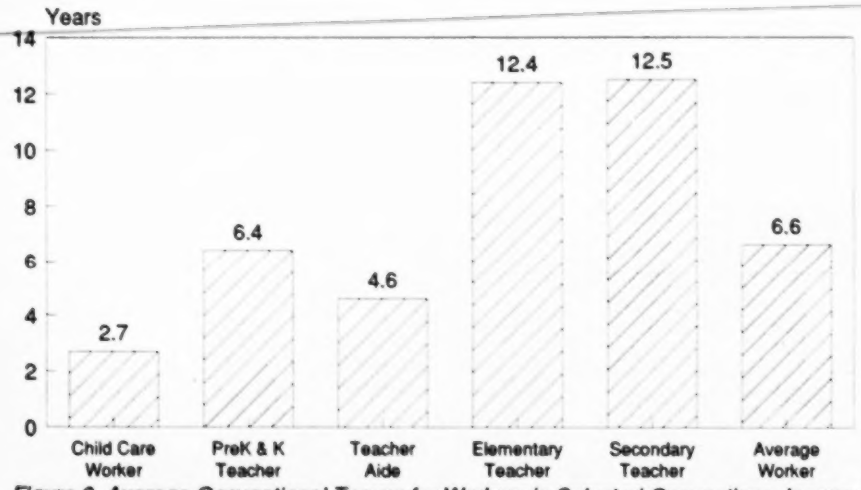

Figure 6. Average Occupational Tenure for Workers in Selected Occupations January 1987; source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Projections and Training Data, unpublished analyses

Occupational Retention

Two measures of retention that are available nationally include *tenure*, the average number of years in the field for workers in that category, and *separation rates*, the percentage of workers who have left the field from one year to the next.

Compared to the chart on salaries, Figures 6 and 7 clearly illustrate the direct links between salaries and retention. Sadly, these measures are actually *low* estimates of retention since they consider *occupation*. Individuals who change jobs but do not leave the field are not captured in these figures. Yet, this type of turnover is equally detrimental to the program and the children affected. The issue of retention is particularly crucial when considering the care and education of young children, because of the vulnerability of very young children to disruptions in established relationships. For a very young child, the loss of a trusted teacher or caregiver can have a devastating impact.

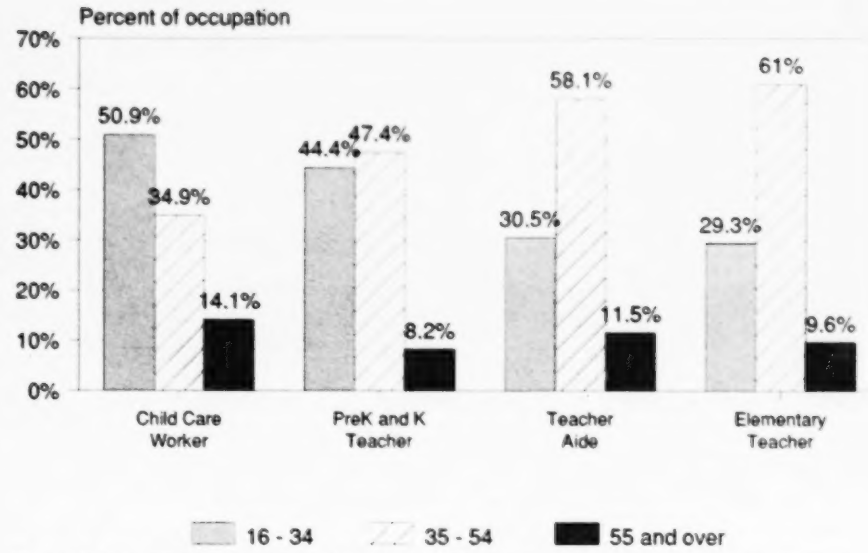

Figure 2. Age Distribution of Workers in Selected Occupations; source: 1988 Current Population Survey, unpublished analyses

Age

Child care workers are the youngest workers in early childhood occupations. The difference points to the lack of experience of many child care workers and suggests that many leave the field after a relatively short time.

Education

Most early childhood workers have some postsecondary education. Educational level often varies because of differences in the expectations of academic institutions and government for various settings. Public schools typically require a 4-year degree and certification; other programs often have less stringent requirements. Regardless, educational levels tend to be higher than the national norm.

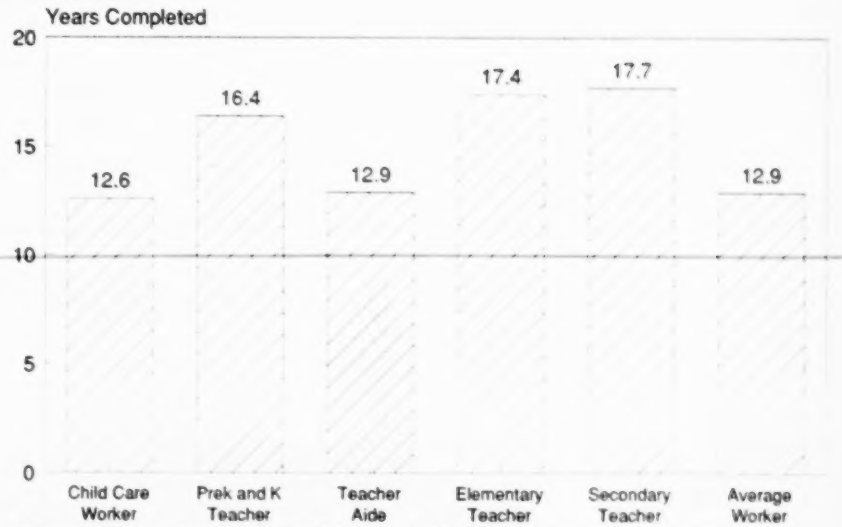

Figure 3. Educational Level of Workers in Selected Occupations; source: 1988 Current Population Survey; unpublished analyses

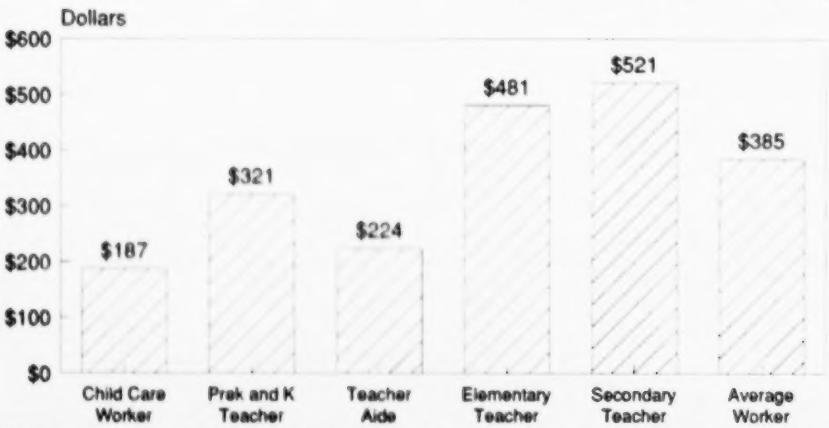

Figure 4. Weekly Salary of Full-time Workers in Selected Occupations; source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1988 Current Population Survey, unpublished analyses

Salary

Like educational levels, salaries are dependent upon the work setting, and in general are higher when the program is associated with a public school. However, even in public schools there appears to be less valuing of work with younger children, as illustrated by the disparity with salaries of secondary teachers.

The supply and quality of early childhood programs are being strangled by an inability to attract and retain qualified employees. This problem exists because of the inadequate compensation, low status, and poor working conditions which typify the field. Combined with an unprecedented demand for services, this constitutes a crisis for the early childhood profession and the nation.

—NAEYC, 1988

For further information

High Skill and Low Pay: The Economics of Child Care Work, Hartmann, H.I., & Pearce, D.M. (1989). Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1400 20th Street, N.W., Suite 104, Washington, DC 20036.

The Growing Crisis in Child Care: Quality, Compensation, and Affordability in Early Childhood Programs, B. Willer, NAEYC #751. Cost $5.

Child Care Employee Project

In addition to a number of resources addressing staffing issues, CCEP is implementing the *National Child Care Staffing Study*, which will provide national data on characteristics of child care providers linked to measures of child care quality. For information, contact CCEP, P.O. Box 5603, Berkeley, CA 94705.

The authors express appreciation to the members of the NAEYC Advisory Panel on Quality, Compensation, and Affordability—Joan Lombardi, Jerlean Daniel, Ellen Galinsky, Bob Granger, Janice Hale-Benson, Kathy Modigliani, Caro Pemberton, and Marcy Whitebook—and Alan Eck of the Bureau of Labor Statistics for assistance in preparing this brochure.

Single copies of this brochure, NAEYC #550, are available from NAEYC for 50 cents each; 100 copies are $10.

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